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CONTENTS

25X1

TURKEY: Agreement to stop opium production.

25X1

25X1

25X1

Approved For Release 2003/08/08 : CIA-RDP79T00975A019400050003-9

Next 5 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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TURKEY: PRIME MINISTER ERIM HAS AGREED TO STOP TURKISH OPIUM PRODUCTION AFTER THE 1972 HARVEST.

ERIM TOLD THE US AMBASSADOR IN ANKARA THAT HE WOULD ISSUE A DECREE ON 30 JUNE LIMITING THE PLANTING OF THE POPPY CROP NEXT FALL TO FOUR PROVINCES; AFTER IT IS HARVESTED, NO PLANTING WILL BE ALLOWED. ERIM ASKED THE US TO PROVIDE COMPENSATION TO TURKISH FARMERS UNTIL THEIR INCOME FROM NEW SOURCES BALANCES THAT DERIVED FROM OPIUM PRODUCTION, A PERIOD HE ESTIMATED AT THREE TO FOUR YEARS. HE ALSO ASKED FOR A PUBLIC STATEMENT OF CONGRATULATIONS FROM PRESIDENT NIXON AND INCREASED AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL AID.

ELIMINATION OF THE TURKISH CROP WILL NOT HAVE AN IMMEDIATE EFFECT ON THE FLOW OF OPIUM LEAVING TURKEY. IN ADDITION TO LEAKAGE FROM LEGAL PLANTING IN THE FOUR PROVINCES NEXT YEAR, THERE ARE CONSIDERABLE INVENTORIES FROM PREVIOUS HARVESTS. NO DISRUPTION IN THE SUPPLY FROM TURKEY IS EXPECTED IN THE US AT LEAST UNTIL 1973.

DESPITE ERIM'S FEAR THAT THE ELIMINATION OF OPIUM PRODUCTION "MIGHT EVEN BRING ABOUT THE FALL OF MY GOVERNMENT," HE IS ON FIRMER GROUND THAN ANY PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION. HE IS KNOWN TO HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE MILITARY AND THUS APPEARS SAFE FROM LOCALIZED POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS.

25X1

29 Jun 71

Central Intelligence Bulletin

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25X1

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Next 2 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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